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We, the undersigned, hereby certify that we have read the within thesis entitled "The Personality of God," submitted by Lawrence G. Seiber, B.A., in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, and we hereby recommend its acceptance.

Edmonton,
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April 13,
1933.

THE PERSONALITY OF GOD

A Dissertation

by

Lawrence G. Seiber, B.A.

In candidacy for the B. D. Degree.

for

Department of Philosophy of Religion

under Dr. A. S. Tuttle.

April, 1933



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INTRODUCTION

The battle which has raged about the apparent conflict between religion and philosophy and science is a mere skirmish compared to the war which will be fought over the question of the personality of God. Such is the thought of Dr. Huxley in pointing toward one of the problems which will have to be considered by philosophy. Materialism has well nigh run its course and philosophy and science is now making bold to say that behind all appearances there is a spiritual source with which we have to reckon.

In this dissertation we shall attempt an appreciation of the problem here suggested and try to gain some idea of the Personality of God. Having traced through the history of man the idea of God we shall give the philosophic background for the discussion of Divine Personality. We should remember throughout the discussion that we speak only from the Christian point of view.

I THE HISTORY OF THE IDEA OF GOD

A strange mixture of feeling - of kinship and estrangement - crowds in upon us when we realize that we have in the intuitions of primitive man glimpses of what for us are philosophical truths founded upon experience interpretations. Primitive man soon came to the notion that the world he was living in was more than what he could see and feel. He was impressed by the forces about him and he was terrified because he could not distinguish them from himself. These were beyond and behind appearances and caused a response in himself which he could not understand.

Looking in upon himself, without being able to translate his feelings into a concept, primitive man had what we may call the feeling of numen. This feeling or mental state - a reflection in the mind in terms of feeling - was "perfectly sui generis and irreducible to any other; and, like every elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined."¹

(1) The numinous is that unique original overplus of feeling which we associate with the idea of holiness when the ethical or rational factors have been subtracted. It is a feeling of dependence. It is the emotion of a creature, abased and overwhelmed by its own nothingness, in contrast to that which is supreme and above all creatures. You have the numinous revealed in Abraham's words when he pleads with God for the men of Sodom:

(1) Otto - Idea of the Holy, p. 7.

"Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." (1) This creature - feeling is the first subjective accompaniment and effect of another feeling-element in itself referring to an object outside the self - the numinous.

"The nature of the numinous is such that it grips or stirs the human mind with this and that determinate affective state." (2) We must give now an indication of these states. There is an element which occupies the mind with a bewildering strength and if we follow it up we find it in rites and ceremonies, in the atmosphere that clings to religious monuments, buildings, temples and churches. This element we may call appropriately Mysterium Tremendum. The feeling of it may come as a sudden eruption from the depths of the soul, or as the hushed trembling of a creature in the presence of - of whom or what? - that which is a mystery inexpressible, beyond conception, extraordinary and above all other creatures. (3)

The first stir of the mysterium tremendum begins in the feeling of something uncanny, eerie, or weird. This feeling forms the starting point for the history of all religious development. All explanations of religion must recognize this fact. The shuddering,

(1) Genesis 18:27

(2) Otto - Idea of the Holy, p.12.

(3) ibid, p.13.

which is much more than natural fear, implies that the mysterious is already beginning to loom before the mind, to touch the feelings. At the highest level of all, where the worship of God is purest, this element does not disappear. The shudder has lost its crazy and bewildering note, but not the ineffable something that holds the mind. It has become a mystical awe and sets free the creature-feeling.

The complementary stir of feeling is contained in the second part of the term - tremendum. It is a tremor, a baffling and puzzling property of the numen, not occasioned by natural fear but by orge. It is like a hidden force of nature, electricity, discharging itself upon any one who comes too near. "On the surface orge, or wrath, appears as mere caprice, but it is a natural and rational expression of the Mysterious. We can only express it by the aid of a naive analogy from the domain of natural experience, in this case from the ordinary passionnal life of man. Orge is an ideogram of a unique emotional moment singularly awe-inspiring. It is something supra-rational prompting to a sense of tremor that n natural anger could arouse." (1)

The absolute unapproachability thus felt carries with it a sense of overpoweringness and urgency. Because the numinous is beyond primitive man and yet exciting within him a sense of something uncanny he cannot but

(1) ibid, p.18.

feel its aweful majesty as active, compelling and alive. Through this series of feeling appears the wholly other; that something which is inherently incommensurable with his own kind and character. The mystery is not only something to be wondered at by primitive man but also something which entrances him. So he is at the same time repelled and attracted. The numinous has both wholly Otherness and fascinating aspects.

The earliest manifestations of the numinous were not comprehensive. They were notions, beliefs, partial expressions carrying with them a strange idea of power. This was the strand which ran through the naive and rudimentary fancies of primitive minds. It was an unsystematic belief in a mysterious property, existing everywhere in nature, vague undefinable and often misunderstood by those of other cultural levels. Though it existed everywhere primitive man's attitude toward it was piecemeal, that was the way he looked out upon the universe. Each object was a thing in itself, so was his fellow man, and he did not attempt to analyse these things into body and soul. We would say, psychologically, that the belief in this power was due to the awareness of an influx into consciousness of subconscious energy.

Bishop Codrington who worked among the Melanesians would say that this belief in potency or power - mana - was a conception of something supernatural, communicable, mobile and invisible diffused amongst natural objects and human beings; and though impersonal and universal its

presence was assigned as the explanation of unusual powers in objects and persons. (1)

Mana effected everything beyond the power of primitive man and was revealed to him in physical forces and the excellencies of man. The savage saw it in a stone of peculiar shape which attracted his attention. If the shape of the stone resembled fruit he would lay it at the root of the fruit tree. If the crop was abundant this demonstrated that he was right; there was mana in it. He felt it in himself as subconscious impulses which influenced him and yet he could not understand. Was that not mana, and did he not feel it flowing through him, when in contact with a fellow man his emotions were heightened and energies were increased? The amount of energy he possessed, therefore, determined his success and strength. What other conclusion could he come to than he should get this mana for himself, and for his own benefit. Special ability depended upon it and he must maintain right relations to it. Mana was, then, for primitive man the pervading and animating principle of phenomena and of human action, but there is no evidence that he ascribed it to a personal deity. In fact Bishop Codrington assures us that mana was impersonal since primitive man had no notion of a Supreme Being. The idea was altogether foreign to him since he could not conceive of any being occupying a very elevated place in his world.

To think that things and himself and his fellow-men

(1) King - The Development of Religion, p.134.

had mana and were alive was quite natural to primitive man and involved little reflection. He could not imagine in other phenomena what he could not recognize in himself. The fact that he attributed life to external objects which was the same as his own did not mean that he confused his categories but that he lacked experience in bringing objects under the two classes of animate and inanimate. Did he not react to those about him, to animals, and to things? That was enough to cause him to believe that things reacted as well. The trees, the stars, the mountain, the dawn, the waterfall, animals and himself all had a material invisible life. To the savage this was an unavoidable influence.

This life was bound up within these forms. These things had spirits. But sometimes the spirits left their homes. The spirit of the tree left in the fall and returned in the spring. The spirits of the grass and the flowers did the same. Was it that the spirit left the earth itself? Primitive man found the key to this quite natural transition in his own psychical experiences. When he went to sleep at nights he had dreams and in these dreams something wandered about at pleasure. This something which went wandering must have been his spirit and the spirits of the things which accompanied him. Dreams, the departure of life from the trees, and the departure of breath at death suggested that what makes a thing alive is something separable from it, so the idea of souls as distinct from the bodies which they inhabited arose.

The transition from the bound to the free spirit was made and naturally the above and beyond, the mysterious power, came to have a local habitation - it was incarnated.

Now the spirit of life could be worshipped, and sacrifices could be made to it. The mysterious powers outside and beyond the primitive man, to which he attributed a will such as he possessed but greater and more mysterious, were now localized and partially interpreted so that he could worship them and offer sacrifices to them. The first self-interest of the savage was food and shelter and these spirit-powers of the sun, wind, trees, grass, thunder, frost, etc., either hindered or helped him in getting food and shelter. He must treat them kindly and as they wished that he may be successful. He must have these spirits on his side for his own benefit.

As he thought of, and worshipped objectively the spirits of nature so he like wise considered his ancestors. The spirits of the dead were concieved as alive. The power which had gone out of the body resided in the breath, but where was it? It must be wandering about its former habitation because it came back to visit him in his dreams. And now it had the same form, although it was an unsubstantial thing, more mysterious and more powerful. He must treat it kindly to make use of the power in the hunt and in war. So primitive man placated, pleased and worshipped these departed spirits for his own good.

The primitive man's treatment and worship of the resident powers necessitated a ceremonial to get this

power or mana from the object of his attentions. It should be remembered that for the savage the object of his worship stood for the power or mana and represented his mental attitude. The descriptive names which we give these forms are but terms for the objective reality. Why certain things ^hould become the objects of his worship is explained in the fact that they in some way came into his everyday life. They were objects connected with food values, protection, reproduction, shelter, success etc., animals, trees, stones, wind. These things had power which he must keep on his side, or must placate. Many and varied were the ceremonials which grew up with their worship whose object was the obtaining of the spirit for one's-self. In the eating of food, the shedding of blood, the use of water, fire etc., he found the means of evoking the power. In some way the object of his worship and he himself were one; but in order to gain more of this mysterious something he performs these rites. In this way the mystic union or participation is made more complete. Because of this the practices acquire greater significance. The god is eaten so that the worshipper has possession of the god's spirit. And yet the god continues to exist apart from the food with undiminished power. So that "out of the original feeling for the impersonal mana, the belief in personal powers arose, and direct appeal to them was surely the most natural thing in the world." (1)

(1) Pratt - Religious Consciousness, p.312.

AS SOON AS THE SOURCE OF MANA BECAME SEPARATED FROM THE CEREMONIAL IT IS ON THE WAY TO DEVELOPING INTO A GOD. AND WHEN ANY EXTERNAL OBJECT BECOMES AN INDEPENDENT OBJECT OF CEREMONIAL ATTENTION IT IS LIKELY TO BE TREATED LIKE A GOD WITH A SPIRIT OR GHOST. OBTAINING A PRIEST AND TEMPLE IT IS VIRTUALLY A GOD. ANIMALS AND INANIMATE OBJECTS BECOMING GODS ARE NOT ANTHROPOMORPHIC. THEY LACK PERSONAL QUALITIES AND, FOR THAT REASON, ARE VAGUE, THEY ARE LIKE HUGE MONSTERS. BUT THEY SOON ACQUIRE THESE QUALITIES, AND MYTHS OF MANY KINDS DEVELOP AROUND THE RESULTANT PERSONAL GOD AND IS CELEBRATED IN HYMN AND EPIC AND PORTRAYED IN STONE AS A HEROIC FIGURE. IN TIME MAN'S GODS BECAME EXALTED HUMAN BEINGS - HIS IDEALS OF WHAT HE HIMSELF WOULD LIKE TO BE.

WHEN THE SOURCE AND VEHICLE OF MANA BECAME ASSOCIATED WITH ANCESTORS THEY DEVELOPED IN A DIFFERENT WAY INTO DEITIES. WHAT WAS MORE NATURAL THAN THAT THESE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED IN THE LIVING SPIRITS OR GHOSTS OF THEIR DEAD SHOULD CONTINUE TO DESIRE THEIR AID AND SYMPATHY. THE WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS BECAME A DOMESTIC CEREMONIAL, - THE SETTING ASIDE OF FOOD AND A SOCIAL GATHERING OF BOTH DEAD AND ALIVE. IN TIME ONE ANCESTOR BECAME A TRIBAL DEITY OR GOD. OR SOME TRIBAL HERO WITH A GREAT AMOUNT OF MANA BECAME A GOD SINCE HE WAS MORE POWERFUL TO HELP THEM AFTER DEATH THAN BEFORE. SPIRITS OR GHOSTS OF THE DEPARTED WERE ALREADY ANTHROPOMORPHIC AND TO BECOME GODS ONLY NEEDED TO BECOME EXALTED IN THE MINDS OF THE WORSHIPERS. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GHOST AND A GOD WAS ONLY

a matter of degree.

As time went on these many gods fused into one God or world order and became less anthropomorphic. "AS the phenomena of nature were generalized, the deities or super-human beings regarded as their sources were likewise generalize , until the conception of nature as a whole gave rise to the conception of a single Deity as the author and ruler of nature; and in accordance with the order of its genesis, this notion of Deity was still the notion of a Being possessed of psychical attributes, and in some way like unto Man.

But there was another cause, besides scientific generalization, which led men's minds toward monotheism. The conception of tutelar deities, which was the most prominent practical feature of ancestor worship, was directly affected by the political development of the peoples of antiquity. AS tribes were consolidated into nations, the tutelar gods of the tribes became generalized or the god of some leading tribe came to supersede his fellows, until the result was a single national deity, at first regarded as the greatest among gods, afterwards as the only God. The most striking instance of this method of development is afforded by the Hebrew conception of Jehovah." (1)

It is not surprising that we find nature worship predominant among one group of people and ancestor worship among another, and that each should find a sup-

(1) Fiske - Idea of God, p.72-4.

reme deity at the end of the evolution. With the Greeks it was nature worship. No wonder, then, that they should have accomplished much in the realm of science. Such abstract thinking revealed itself in the way they deified the powers of nature. They were able to imagine the indwelling spirit of the sun, the sky, the storm, etc., without the help of an individual ghost. So it was that their great thinkers framed a conception of God acting in and through the powers of nature without a gross anthropomorphic symbolism. They regard Deity as immanent in the universe, and operating through natural laws. God is the ever-present life of the world; through him do all things consist, and events are the revelation of the divine wisdom or reason.

The great divinities of the hellenic pantheon were personifications of physical phenomena. Their crude beginnings were developed in the Homeric poems into the most sublime beings that the mind could produce in anthropomorphic imagery. The great divinity, Zeus, was no better nor worse than the people themselves. Both men and gods lived in close contact and sympathy with one another. The Greek conception of the world was that it was governed by a body of personal and reasoning rulers like man in mind and shape only higher. One God became supreme but so long as the Greeks clothed their god or gods in flesh and celebrated them as human beings writ large they put a limit to their spiritual religious development.

This was not an acceptable conception of deity for the Hebrew. His God was remote from the world. This kind of thinking conceived of the universe as a machine impelled by outside force with a god removed from the activity and watching it go and interfering only when he pleased. The creator and the created are entirely separated.

Yahweh, the great deity of the Hebrews, was a national god and in time took on the attributes characteristic of an ideal king and an ideal father. Upon this foundation the prophets built their conception of God. So in one great leap of mind - it was a leap because their idea of one supreme being grew so rapidly - the family god and the transcendent absentee god of the universe became one. Finally the prophets of this people of great religious genius gave the world "an effective conception of God as independent of place and time and nation, upholder of social justice and individual morality, and accessible in terms of personal intimacy to individual worshipper." (1)

These conceptions we of the western world have inherited and developed in accordance with our own peculiar genius. It is now left for us to translate and to interpret the nature of God for ourselves. But, before we can do this, we must try to discover the thought mould behind our idea of God as revealed in the philosophy of the day.

(1) Wright - Student's Philosophy of Religion, p.141.

II THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

How, then, do we interpret this mysterious power which the savage saw in the phenomenal world: which acted upon the mind of the Greek and brought forth a man writ large as the personification of the unifying element in the universe; which caused the Hebrew to speak of the power as Yahweh above and in whom was wrapped up his own destiny and that of the nations about him? Beneath all the crudities of the thought of primitive man there was a feeling that behind all that he could see and hear and feel was a source, a power, which was other than material. Here is an essential truth which modern philosophy must recognize. And if the savage gave to this power qualities, psychical qualities, similar to those which he possessed, again philosophy ought to consider whether this is purely a psychological product, or whether it points to some personal element in the power behind nature. Before the savage could postulate any unseen power beyond the things of sense he had to recognize an external world common to himself and his fellow-savage. We, in like manner, must satisfy ourselves as to the nature of the phenomenal world before we can direct ourselves toward that which lies beyond the material. This being done we shall find that science and philosophy through knowledge and experience cannot escape positing a power of some sort as the source

and guiding principle behind and within the universe.

The savage did not attempt to prove to himself that there was an external world of things sensible. He encountered it every time he moved. He could make use of a stone, or a stick; he beheld the trees, the mountains and the waterfall, the lightning and the stars; these things were outside of him. That was all the proof he required. For us this is not enough. We also recognize these things but ask are they really external to our consciousness. What, then, is the external world? The very term suggests that it is something which can be looked at from the point of view other than our own. If I were the only conscious being in the world I would have nothing except the content of my own consciousness as data for an external world. This content I may account for by postulating an external world; but I could in like manner apply this hypothesis to the world of my consciousness. "The motive, then, for the conception of an external world - a world which will remain significant when my consciousness ceases to be - lies in the existence of other conscious beings. We compare notes and we find that our experiences are not independent of one another. Much that is in my consciousness is individual, but there is an element common to other conscious beings. That common element cannot be placed in one man's neutral ground - an external world. We are all partners in it on the same footing. The external world is a symposium of the presentations to individuals in all sorts of circumstances." (1)

(1) A. S. Eddington, "Science, Religion and Reality," edited by Joseph Needham, p. 192.

Having established the reality of the external world we wonder whether it is self-contained or whether there is some deeper ground of existence. Science itself now points to the existence of another world, a world of being which forms the background of the world of sense. "In exploring his own territory in the external world the physicist comes up against the influence of that wider reality which he cannot altogether shut out." (1) There is no difficulty in recognizing a wider spiritual reality from which the external world is a selection, but it is difficult to explain why this selected section seems to constitute a self-contained system. May it be suggested with A. S. Eddington that the division into a material and a spiritual world is superficial, and that the line of cleavage is between the metrical and non-metrical aspects of the world. The physical world then at some point, or throughout the whole, impinges upon the spiritual world and thus derives its actuality. At any rate the mind has by selection made its physical environment; may there not be a greater Mind which has found part of its environment in these little sparks which flicker for a few years and go out. Science says nothing as to the nature of the world-spirit being good or evil; "but it does perhaps justify us in applying the adjective creative." (2)

(1) ibid, p.217

(2) A. S. Eddington in S. R. and R. - Joseph Needham, P. 217.

Physics tell us that all motions of matter are manifestations of force, to which we can assign neither beginning nor end. Matter is indestructible, motion is continuous, and beneath both there lies the truth that force is persistent. Herbert Spencer has proven that the law of universal evolution is a necessary consequence of this persistent force. This gradual evolution in which progress is from the simple to the complex in its minuteness of detail and its vastness from age to age with all its weird and subtle changes is by means of an immanent power or resident force, or a single animating principle that is both infinite and eternal.

What name shall we give to this power, or force or principle? If we call it Force we would not be enlightened since it acquired meaning only from the relations in which it is used. It is merely a symbol. But a symbol of what?

It is desirable "that physics should have a word as thoroughly abstract, as utterly emptied of all connotations of personality, as possible, so that it may be used like a mathematical symbol. Such a word is Force." (1) But what we are dealing with is the most substantial of realities, the Reality which is behind all appearances and from which we cannot escape. Let us name this, not force which persists but, Power-Inmanent - which is everywhere manifested in phenomena.

(1) Fiske -"Idea of God," p. 182.

Can we, then, regard it as material, or can we speak of its ceaseless activity as the working of "blind necessity?"

We cannot either regard this Power as material or its workings as blind necessity. It is the source of matter, of what we see, hear and touch, it cannot itself be material. Not only does this Power manifest itself as the external world, but it also produces states of consciousness, qualities, in our minds which we are apt to attribute to the external world. The point is "we are bound to conceive of the Reality in terms of the only reality we know, or else refrain from conceiving it under any form whatever. We might just as well try to escape from the air in which we breathe as to expel from consciousness the Power which is manifested throughout what we call the material universe. But the only conclusion we can consistently hold is that this is the very same power 'which in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness'." (1)

Now the question is as to how this Power works. Three alternatives arise. First, is the Power materialistic in nature? From what has been said above we can dismiss this proposition without discussion. Secondly, does this Power or Being impart certain energy at the beginning by virtue of which the movement is bound to go forward to its ultimate end, i.e. did matter receive an original endowment by virtue of which it contains the promise and potency of all forms of life? Here we have a view of the

universe which sees all that is called new coming out of something which was there in germ - an unfolding of something which was implicit in the system. In a few primordial germs we have the whole future world. If this obtains our discussion as to a personal Power ends, but one alternative remains. Does this Power, continuously and ever-increasingly impart itself to, or realize itself in, the creational process?

If this power continuously and ever-increasingly imparts itself for self-realization in the creational process, what can we say about it? The primitive mind sees in this power an impersonal force which is within and without, i.e., immanent and transcendent. The scientist in working in his section of the external world is ever coming up against the wider reality which he cannot neglect. The philosopher says that there is an infinite and eternal source of energy from which all things proceed. They all imply that there is no probability or possibility of exhausting this reality - the known is such a small fragment of it. How are we to discover it? There is only one way finally and that is by experience.

The savage from his own experience knows that his movements are due to will or purpose and concludes that all motion is due to will or purpose. We, too, through experience and speculation posit will or purpose in the power which is manifested in the external world and in us.

we must then postulate - consciousness in this Power and self-consciousness since it cannot be less than ourselves.

There are two ways of thinking. We may begin with the particular work toward the universal, or we may begin with the universal and find it in the particular. Which-ever we think we shall find that there is something of the universal in the particular and therefore the particular tells us something of the universal. The scientist working in his restricted fields is ever coming up against the wider reality which he cannot shut out, and the philosopher working with a world view is forever finding the wider reality in the particular. It seems, then, that the ultimate Reality-Deity - is the only thing that is known and its meaning terminates in object. The finite is from the infinite, and we know the infinite by reason of the finite which is expressed.

We find, then, in everything about us a manifestation of Deity. All existence is an outcome of Deity in the forms of space and time. "The history of the world must be the entrance of Deity into finite forms until at length it appears in the fullness of the original divine thought." (1)

Let us elaborate this view in the light of modern science and philosophy. The key word is evolution. Our difficulty is that we see in the universe partial view, bits of the process picked out and not the ever-flowing

(1) Transcribed from lecture notes given by Dr. A. S. Tuttle.

streams of reality. That is the only way in which the finite can grasp the infinite. It matters not where we begin. We may start with carbonated slime, motivated by heat whence life springs in unicellular form and develops by refinement and complexity into consciousness, self-consciousness, mind, - without any breaks in the process until Deity is reached; Deity being the next higher stage.

This view of emergent evolution is set forth by Alexander in his book "Space, Time and Deity." Here Time-Space in fluid relations is the source and nisus of everything. By refinement and complexity matter emerges and each higher degree in matter is a product of the same refinement and complexity. Later life appears, then consciousness, self-consciousness and mind with Deity at the top of the ladder. The basis of the whole structure - Time-Space is impersonal and does not satisfy us.

A more satisfactory view may be obtained from the philosophy of Lloyd Morgan, Alexander's successor in the Gifford Lectureship. Morgan accepts the framework of Alexander's scheme in respect to the hierarchy of emergents, but he does not accept Time-Space as the nisus of the system. God as conceived by Morgan is radically different from Alexander's conception. Morgan interprets the universe in a naturalistic way and also in a spiritual, and these two are not opposed. In his own words: my thorough-going naturalism takes form in the concept of evolution as an emergent and is universally applicable throughout nature, including human nature, bodily and mentally. But I am one

of those who holds that life and mind should not be identified with, but should be distinguished from, spirit. I regard life and mind as manifestations of spirit in an ascending hierarchy of such manifestations. This brings them within the orbit of natural events to be interpreted subject to the methods of naturalism. In accordance with this view, spirit is not a 'quality' at the summit of the evolutionary hierarchy. It is that of which all qualities, from the lowest to the highest, are manifestations under the conditions of 'space and time.' " (1)

Here we have stated not only his position which needs filling in, but also fundamental criticism of Alexander's position. We shall now endeavour to state Morgan's position more explicitly. The world in which we live seems to be, historically, an orderly sequence of events with every now and again a bringing forth of something new. This new element is called an emergent and it is with this idea of emergence that we have to do. The emergent is not a resultant since a resultant is a mechanical equivalent. An emergent is more, it differs in the fact that at each stage in the evolving process there is a new outcropping which cannot be fully explained by what enters into it. The emergent cannot be completely predicted. The emergents are "integral entities and emergent evolution deals with their advance in complexity of stuff and in richness of substantial unity." (2) The stuff is, for instance, the

(1) "Life, Mind and Matter." p.1.

(2) ibid., p.7.

separate atoms contained in H₂O, and the substantial unity is their relatedness. Without stuff there can be no substantial unity or substance. The whole idea is contained in another word of Morgan's concomitance. This carries the aspect of relatedness where there is never one attribute without the other. It suggests that each integral entity or emergent complete in itself carries with it, and cannot be rid of the emergents of its lower levels. Let us take consciousness. Consciousness is an advance in complexity and richness on life; life is an advance on matter, but there is no consciousness without life and no life without matter. The higher emergents involve the lower and without a lower there can be no higher. But what causes these emergents to emerge? For a naturalistic treatment of the universe we accept as being present the impelling force or go of events, and the going together of these events in the way in which they do go together. In other words we recognize and accept some nisus causing emergents to emerge and the way in which they emerge. We also accept as subsistent the determinate plan in accordance with natural events in physical regard, we need not ask the question: What gives to events their initial go? This or that determinate plan? this or that stage of their evolutionary advance? what gives the comprehensive plan to emergent evolution? 'Given may not imply a Giver,'

If some say all advance is attributable to God, and

others say no advance is attributable to God, both accept advance. If for both the facts are the same, the difference lies in the mental attitude towards what one party infers from the facts, and the other party does not." (1)

"While I hold that the proper attitude of naturalism is strictly agnostic, therewith I, for one, am not content. For better or for worse, I acknowledge God as the Nisus through whose activity emergents emerge, and the whole course of emergent evolution is directed." (2) The concept of emergent evolution is not inconsistent with belief in God or a Divine Purpose.

What we have, then, is a theistic emergent evolutionary interpretation of the universe. Above two mental attitudes were stressed; the one which says All advance is attributable to God. If the artist finds more meaning in the world and realizes a richer content in life than a cow with her 'effortless self-nourishment' is not this an advance - an emergent? If Lloyd Morgan finds more reality in attributing all advance to a Divine Purpose than he who does not so attribute advance may we not say the same? "The stress is on the new attitude, for it is this that is, as I think, emergent." (3) "Divine Purpose is objectively real in so far as it is possessed by mind. It is no other than the rational order of the universe. Hence it follows that only in so far as our concept of Divine Purpose in spiritual regard is accordant with rational order in scientific regard, can we accept both as part of our final synthesis." (4)

(1) ibid, p.280

(2) C. L. Morgan, "Emergent Evolution," p.36

(3) C. L. Morgan, "Life, Mind and Matter," Preface.

"In the evolution of that which we deem the highest of natural entities, a man, we have steps in the determinate plan which includes the evolutionary process of all relevant events in him, alike in physical and mental regard. What you regard as the comprehensive and determinate plan of events, I cannot regard but as Divine Purpose within which each miracle has a contributory place. For if all advance in nature be a manifestation of Divine Purpose, on what understanding can the Divine intervene at any stage stage of the manifestation?" (1) There is no Dualism but one realm of reality both natural and spiritual "God is All in all but in diverse modes and degrees of manifestation." (2)

God is inclusive of all advance. "If we regard the whole evolutionary process as a manifestation of Divine Purpose, it is in us as persons that the Divine Personality is revealed." (3) Wherefore "the Living God who is behind and beyond the world, in creation goes out of himself and continuously and progressively manifests himself in all the working toward the highest manifestations of himself." (4) God the unconditioned has become the conditioned in the universe. We deem that the highest product of the evolutionary process is man and in him we find the fullest manifestation of God. The manifestation in human form is in Christ. So it is that we can read anew

(1) ibid, p.300

(2) ibid, p.301

(3) ibid, p.302

(4) Transcribed from lecture notes of Dr. A. S. Tuttle.

and with greater meaning: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (1)

Now it remains for us through the expansion of thought to reach out towards, though we are really unable to fully grasp, the Personality of God.

(1) John 1:1 ff.

III PERSONALITY, HUMAN AND DIVINE

We shall turn now to the history of the word "person." The original use of the word person "was the designation of the mask worn by the actor on the Roman stage and came to be used of the actor himself and his part in the play." (1) From this it became synonymous with the relations of man in social intercourse generally. At no time, and especially in classical Latin, did a person acquire that use to which we put person as equivalent to human beings. However, the early Christian Church used the word to express the dignity of the rational human being as contained in the Greek word *ὑπότασις*.

The literal meaning of *ὑπότασις* was "a standing under or below" in reference to one being in ambush or concealment. It came to signify what may be called real concrete existence as opposed to a mere appearance. The Latin word which was used in translating the Greek was 'substantia.' *ὕποτασις* which originally meant a being in the widest sense also was translated by the Latin 'substantia'; thus *ὑπότασις* and *ὕποτασις* came to be used, in the New Testament, almost interchangeably. In the early church there was a distinction made between *ὑπότασις* and *οὐσία*, the former referring to the one divine nature and the latter designated the three

(1) C.C.J. Webb, "God and Personality," p.35.

titles: Father, Son and Spirit, but this was not generally accepted. Hence the two words became synonymous, and person wraps up within itself the meaning of both. Boethius (1) in the sixth century gives us the definition which, to all intents and purposes, is that which we use today: Personna est naturae rationabilis individua substantia: a person is the individual subsistence of a rational nature. What do we mean by this? Rational nature by itself is not a person since it implies a universal quality. On the other hand an individual is not a person unless it possesses a rational nature. We use person as describing an individual. A person then is defined as an individual who is aware of a nature common to others and is able to reflect upon this and to give it a form as a general notion.

Such a definition leaves much to be added by way of describing the content of personality. The only possible form of personality of which we have any knowledge is that which we find within our finite and imperfect selves. And, as we know it, it is associated with limitations and imperfections. We are limited by conditions of time and space. We never speak of a dog as having personality because we feel that it is minus that something which would make it possible for us to attribute personality to it. What is this something called personality? It is that "which for us is ultimately real, that from which we derive all our conceptions

(1) Quoted in Webb, "God and Personality," from *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*.

of reality and being, and at the same time is incapable of being an object of knowledge in the ordinary sense."

(1) That is our intuition of personality. It is therefore, measurable in quality and not in quantity; in terms of self-consciousness, will, and affection or love and not in terms of animality as known in a dog.

Personality, which we may call spirit, carries with it, however, quantity or animality since the higher always involves the lower. We are both spirit and body. Spirit is more than mere immateriality and we know it through our own consciousness because we are beings who think, feel, and will. "Personality in man is made up by the combination of these powers of intellect, sensibility and volition in a self-conscious unity, with moral judgment crowning their action with significance. As for the body, it is the servant of personality for the gathering of sensations, and its organ for the expression of its life and action. It is the seat and means of the present personal life, but of personality itself it is no necessary part. Personality might exist without it The Spirit is the ego, the person, and the body is its close ally and servant." (2)

The nature of personality may occupy us, then, from two points of view. It may be treated objectively in which case we consider persons as objects along

(1) W. R. Matthews, "God in Christian Experience," p. 164.

(2) W. N. Clarke, "Outline of Christian Theology," p. 187. ff.

with other objects in the world, or subjectively where we strive to enter into the meaning of personality by reflection upon ourselves.

The first thing which we notice when we consider persons along with other objects in the world is that they belong to the class of living beings and occupy the highest rung of the ladder of evolution. The difference between the higher and the lower beings may be called a difference in individuality. From the first it is characterized by independence - relative independence - of other individuals. Things are individuals but into this discussion we shall not enter. An individual is a being complete in itself and acting as a whole. With each advance in the evolutionary process there is an advance of individuality: a man is more individual than a dog. Each rise in the scale also shows a complexity and refinement both in structure and function, but throughout there is unity. This we see in the behaviour of the individuals as they adapt themselves under all kinds of circumstances. Along with behaviour we cannot help but see that there is consciousness and this quality rises with the rising scale of structure and function. The internal and external complexities correspond. The higher type of individual portrays a complexity of mental element which are not found in the lower type. One of the qualities which make individuals persons, therefore, is rationality. Another of the qualities which emerge in individuals

which we call persons is a complexity and refinement of living and acting about a single core called spontaneity. Though this is present in lower beings it comes to its fullest development here and displays itself finally in creativeness. This is the mark of a new being, and it is the mark of personality. "If we would see what personality is we may look at its achievements. Culture, art, civilization have been made by persons. And these creations of personal mind, which transcend the realm of nature, are sustained by personsTake away personal life and they vanish as though they had never been." (1)

But this objective consideration is not all, the subjective approach will offer us much more and introspection will, besides saying much to us, present more difficult and perplexing problems. The difficulty into which introspection may lead us is that we will be apt to consider that the self or 'I' is a composite existence which can be understood by exhibiting the relation of its elements. The analysis does away with the idea that there is a self which has its states, or is the bearer of experiences; it makes the self a sum of states or experiences. In spite of this psychology we believe that we are more than our states of consciousness and our experiences; we have these. This self, or ego, or 'I' is the 'alogical' core which defies intellectual analysis. It

(1) W. R. Matthews, "God in Christian Experience," p. 166.

is the activity out of which proceeds our mental and physical movements; it is spontaneity, creativeness; it is personality. Here we must distinguish between the self which knows, and the self which is known. The fact of knowing consists in this that there is a cognized experience: I know something. "It may be fully expressed by formula, 'I, conscious of myself as feeling, willing or knowing, know myself feeling, willing, or knowing something.'" (1) This 'I' is the given activity or analogical core. The self is not a sum total of elements, it is "the central and essential element in self-hood; the real and active ego which is continually creative." (2) It is more than the mere knower, it is the knowing, feeling, willing activity. Our self-consciousness, then, is "an immediate awareness of the profound self which is the subject of knowledge, the bearer in feeling and the agent in willing." (3) Ultimately out of this self-experience spring all our conceptions of reality.

We have seen that though we have a consciousness of self which is intuitive we also have a more intellectual acquaintance with ourselves in which the self is the object of knowledge and reflection. This knowledge of ourselves, like all knowledge, is liable to error wherefore we cannot know the self in completeness. The

- (1) ibid, p. 169
- (2) ibid, p. 170
- (3) ibid, p. 170

'I' which knows and the 'me' which is known are distinct. Our idea of ourselves must always be imperfect because we are limited by circumstances which are outside and beyond ourselves. Our reflection is not a product of the active ego alone. The knowledge of self is influenced by impulses and actions caused by our environment and retained by memory as data with which we work. "Though the creative activity of the ego is the essence of personality, that without which it cannot exist, the freedom cannot in human persons be absolute, for the activity is partly determined and limited by the conditions and the environment. We are thus in a position to see that personality in its human form is imperfect, and to note the obvious suggestions which it contains of a Personality in which its limitations are removed." (1) It is, then, that we are not so much complete persons but rather that we are on the road to becoming complete personalities.

We have come to some understanding of the nature of personality incomplete and limited as it is in man, now it is for us to attempt an understanding of Divine Personality. The only worthy way in which to conceive God is not in thinking away that which is characteristic of human personality, but in conceiving the highest in us as present in God in supreme degree. In fact the only way in which we can conceive of God is in the terms of

(1) *ibid*, p. 173.

that which we ourselves know.

Most people conceive of God very anthropomorphically, and if by reflection they lose some of their anthropomorphic definiteness they never lose it entirely. Indeed they cannot. "It is quite true, on the one hand, that to ascribe what we know as human personality to the infinite Deity straightway lands us in a contradiction, since personality without limits is inconceivable. But on the other hand, it is no less true that the total elimination of anthropomorphism from the idea of God abolishes the idea itself." (1) But we say that God is a spirit. The words of R. L. Swain give us a very happy picture. "I believe in an anthropomorphic of God, simply because I believe in a Theomorphic man. God must be in man's image, because man is in God's image. But it is not the animal man in whose image God is." (2)

God created man in his own image, but that image is not the animal man which we can see. It is the unseen in man which is the image of God. This unseen we have called the alogical core, the real, active, creative ego, the 'I' and 'me'; but it matters not what we call it. We may call it spirit, or soul or personality. Throughout this discussion we have preferred to call it personality - personality of man, the personality of God. It is here that God and man meet.

When we try to conceive of God we are aware that we see through a glass darkly, and we do not expect to think

(1) J. Fiske, "The Idea of God, p. 135.

(2) R. L. Swain, "What and Where is God." p. 49.

God's thoughts after him except in the crudest of symbolic fashion. We cannot fully understand our own personalities, and that may be because of the divine spark contained in them. The truth is that neither intellectual concepts, nor human language can fully express all that is contained in Deity. There is something mysterious and awesome beyond the rational. In dealing with God we are treating of that which is Infinite and which transcends all our powers since we are finite and limited. We cannot limit the Infinite. "Our ability to frame ideas is strictly limited by experience, and our personality which is not narrowly hemmed in by the inexorable barriers of circumstance. We cannot, therefore, conceive of such an idea. But it does not follow that there is no reality answering to what such an idea would be if it could be conceived." (1) "The test of inconceivability is only applicable to the world of phenomena from which our experience is gathered. It fails when applied to that which lies behind phenomena."
 (2) This does not mean that we are to speak of God as Personal because we do think of him in terms of our own being, "the side of his nature which is turned manward."
 (3) But personality implies the existence of a contrast between self and not-self, an ego and an 'other', so how can we conceive of the personality of God. We have seen that the 'other' is an invariable accompaniment of human

(1) J. Fiske, "The Idea of God." p. 136.

(2) ibid, p. 136.

(3) Otto, "Idea of the Holy," p. 208.

personality, the only personality of which we are in any degree certain, but we have also seen that it is possible to conceive of personality apart from circumstances and environment at least there must be a reality which answers to such an idea if we could clearly conceive it. Personality is a positive activity. "That this activity should find itself opposed and limited by forces or conditions which are not created by itself may therefore be, not a necessary element in personality as such, but a characteristic of human personality." (1) Personal life seems to be possible only within an environment. But in this sense God cannot be thought of as a person because he can have no environment as we conceive it; there is nothing quite outside him. But in the Godhead we have the self and the other, i.e. the self which knows and the self which is known and in that fellowship and responsiveness between these two elements in the Godhead we may find the true secret to Divine Personality.

The idea of God also suggests the idea of the source of all things and beings. The one distinctive mark of human personality is creativeness, so that the conception of one source gives us the hypothesis of a personal God. This is our concern, the creative Personality of God. God is the creator of all things. Upon him all things depend, not in whom all things are which would make him the absolute, nor who is exhausted in the things

(1) W. R. Matthews, "God in Christian Experience." p. 175.

which he creates which would make all things God.

God the Creative Personality distinguishes himself from himself and goes out to express himself in creation so that all things are made by Him and upon him do all things depend.

In ourselves we see a complexity and multiplicity of structure and function striving for unity. The idea of God gives us the idea of unity and on his basis we can accept the hypothesis of God as personal. In him all things consist. Here we see a solution to the vexing problem in philosophy - the one and the many. It is not completely solved because we cannot give a perfect picture of the Personality of God, but if we can clarify our thought and experience we have accomplished our task.

The idea of the personality of God gives us the idea of complete self-knowledge. We have seen in dealing with human personality that self-knowledge is a necessary attribute of personality and cannot be present in full measure in human persons. In the experience of God the knowing self finds its image in the self known. The 'I' and the 'me' are one and the same. This is the essence of self-hood and personality if we remember that it is a centre of activity. The 'I' is active in knowing the 'me'; the 'me' cannot be passive so that in its activity God knows himself. God the Father is

knowing and active in God the Son who is also knowing and active, and in the Son's activity the Father knows himself; there is reciprocal activity and fellowship.

If we were to continue this thought we should see that in God we have the unity of the Trinity, and that the Creative Personality expresses itself through the Son, who is the agent in creation, and in him God makes himself manifest in the highest form possible. The implication of this statement cannot be pursued here since we are concerned only with the Personality of God.

The idea of Personality carries with it the idea of purpose. In human personality purpose is will expressing itself in actions in the physical world - conduct - which are the outcome of thought and feeling. In Divine Personality purpose is the divine will expressing itself in the developing universe. God is distinguishing himself and going out to express himself in the evolutionary process until at last he has expressed himself in the fullest and highest possible human form. All that is in an expression of Divine Purpose which is motivated by will. The Divine Creative Personality is a necessary hypothesis.

The idea of Personality is an idea of love. God is love. This is the fundamental quality of the Divine Being and was revealed most completely in the Son. The Love of God is not the natural emotion which we know, nor is it that love which we express one to the other, but is

as a disposition of will and is combined with an awful element which cannot be expressed nor conceived. The love of man is an outreaching power which has as its object the good of the beloved and in this is found the vehicle of progress and the basis of fellowship. There is mutual responsiveness. In the love of God, also is an outreaching power which wills the highest good of its object, man; not man as inclusive of the race but man as an individual. It is a relation of persons. The Divine Personality goes out in love to man and draws him while man expresses his responsiveness by seeking fellowship with the Divine through all the aspects and functions of worship.

The Personality of God includes all that which we have tried to put into the words: self-experience of self-knowledge, creativeness, purpose or will, and love. But when we have done this we yet fall short of giving an adequate expression to what we mean by the Personality of God. Just as we have seen that we cannot know the universal from inferences and conceptions of the particular, just so we cannot put into the content of language the full idea of Divine Personality. Even in feeling we still sense something more - an awe and a mystery which can find expression only in the word supra-personal.

Because there is this mystery or non-rational content in the Divine Being we sometimes think that the mystic

will not accept personality as an attribute of God. But if we remember that what the mystic means is a "preponderance in religious consciousness, even to the point of one-sided exaggeration, of its non-rational features," (1) we shall understand that for which he is contending. "It is the 'wholly other' aspect of the numen, resisting every analogy, every attempted comparison, and every determination; so that it is here really true that 'omnis determinatio est negatio.'"¹ (2) Here we have that element in which devotion and worship find their consummation. But it is necessary for us along with this great influx of the Divine to melt it down into human traits carried to the highest of that which we know. This we do that we may not only feel this 'presence' but that we may refer to the Divine as 'thou'. Out of this has arisen our whole discussion of the Personality of God. Though we speak of the Divine Personality by which we mean that part of 'God turned manward,' there is also that part which burst the bounds of the personal. This strange paradox is the heart of the truth about the Divine. How can we possibly understand the Divine? Can the finite comprehend the Infinite? This is the content of the term supra-personal.

We have tried within the confines of these few pages to give the content to the title of the thesis, the Personality of God, but have found that we have uttered that which we do not fully understand; that which is too wonderful for our minds to grasp and for our language to express.

(1) Otto, "The Idea of the Holy," p. 202.
 (2) ibid., p. 202.



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